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A

MEMORIAL

OF THE

GOODNESS OF GOD,

IN

TWO DISCOURSES,

DELIVERED AT THE OPENING OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK, JAN. 11, 1846,

BY THE PASTOR.

W. W. Phillips D.D.

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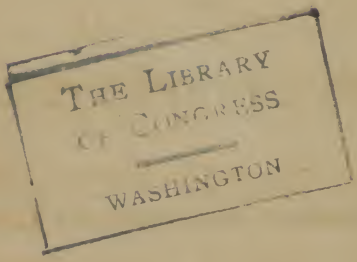

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A MEMORIAL

OF THE

GOODNESS OF GOD.

DISCOURSE I.

TEXT.—JEREMIAH li. 10, last clause of the verse, "Come and let us declare in Zion the work of the Lord our God."

OUR meeting in this house of prayer to-day is calculated to awaken the most tender and thrilling recollections, and to call forth our warmest expressions of gratitude to the great Head of the Church. We have, as a congregation, passed through a severe ordeal. To be obliged to leave our former place of worship, and to break away from all those associations by which it had become endeared to us—to abandon the ground

upon which our predecessors, through successive generations, had met, and upon which many of us had so frequently been permitted to engage in the worship of Almighty God—where the glorious Gospel of the grace of God had been for so long a period proclaimed, and the sacraments administered by distinguished servants of Christ—where so many prayers had been offered and answered—where the Holy Spirit had been poured out—and where, through His influence so many had been born into the kingdom of God, sanctified, comforted and prepared for heaven—was a great trial, and occasioned a painful conflict. Yet, if we could, upon our first removal from thence, at once have entered this commodious edifice, it would have been an alleviation of our regret, and would have prevented the danger of dispersion to which the congregation has been

exposed ever since. But it was not so—we have been subjected to great inconvenience and serious injury through the want of a suitable and comfortable place of worship in the meantime.

The result, however, has been most gratifying, and is a just cause of thanksgiving. Instead of having been weakened, we have been strengthened during the period of our temporary exile, and under all the unfavorable circumstances attending it. The attachment of the members of the congregation to the church of their fathers, and of their choice, has triumphed over all the considerations and influences by which they were tempted to separate from us, and we now know who are the true, sincere, conscientiously devoted, and tried friends of the First Presbyterian Church. They have done well—they have endured and performed a good work—the record of

which is on high. We pray that the blessing of our covenant God, to whom they look for their reward, may descend upon them and upon *their children*, henceforth and forever.

The words of the text have been selected on account of the sentiments which they express. They inculcate the duty of acknowledging the goodness of God, and of recounting his mercies towards us; and they teach us that this duty is to be performed *in Zion*. We are not merely in secret and as individuals to feel grateful—we are called upon as members of the Church to express, in a public manner, a sense of our obligations to the Lord—declaring in Zion what he has done for our souls and what he has done for his Church. The glory which Jehovah receives from his people in return for distinguishing mercies bestowed upon them, is the public and social

praise which they render to him in the ways of his own appointment—"whoso offereth praise glorifieth God." This is our reasonable service, and is in accordance with our very constitution. Ingratitude is a transgression of the law of our nature. Those who are guilty of it discover the deepest depravity, and are justly condemned as brutish in the sight of God, as it is written, "I have nourished and brought up children but they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." We are at all times to set a just value on the blessings we receive whilst we are to feel and acknowledge our unworthiness of them. We should cherish the sentiments expressed by Jacob, when he said, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth

which thou hast showed to thy servant;" and by David, when he exclaimed with unaffected admiration, "Who am I, or what was my Father's house? what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him?" Every good gift, and every perfect gift cometh down from the Father of lights, and all the return we can make him for the benefits and mercies we receive from him continually, is to cherish and to acknowledge in sincerity a sense of our obligations to him. Instead of resting in the gift, we must ascend with our hearts and affections to the Giver. We must declare the wonderful works of the Lord—his grace and condescension to the children of men, and give him thanks that we may show forth his praise. The performance of this duty with a right spirit, and in a suitable frame of mind, will bring with it its own reward and be

acceptable to God. It elevates the soul and prepares it for the pure and holy exercises of heaven. "It is good to give thanks unto the Lord, and praise is comely for the upright." The Lord says of his Church, "This people have I formed for myself. They shall show forth my praise." She is also required to remember her origin and all the way in which she has been led, that with the blessing of God such a remembrance may be made the means of strengthening her faith and confidence in her Redeemer, and of increasing her love and gratitude to him.

We think we can see the hand of God in our ecclesiastical organization, and in our preservation as a branch of the Church of Jesus Christ. Believing that this has been his work, we wish to declare it and to give him thanks for it.

Without assailing, or making invidious comparisons with, the religious creed of

other Christian denominations—and certainly without any design of disparaging or denouncing them—we propose on the present occasion to give a general statement and brief defence of that system of truth and ecclesiastical order which has been adopted by the Presbyterian Church.

We believe that our doctrine, form of government and discipline, are strictly in accordance with the Word of God, and therefore prefer and hold them. We think we are prepared to show, by a fair interpretation of the Scriptures, as a reason of our faith and preference, that the doctrines contained in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms were taught by our Lord and his apostles. Many of them are expressed in their very language, and all of them are founded on their declarations, being according "to that form of sound words once delivered to the saints." It is notorious

that the same objections which were raised against some of them when preached by the Saviour himself, and by his inspired Apostles, and which were answered by them at the time, are still urged against them as they are taught in our standards, and when they are faithfully preached by our ministers, which proves the *unity* of our doctrine with theirs, in those points at least. They are the same which were taught by the Holy Ghost from the beginning—in the faith of which the Fathers lived, obtained a good report and inherited the promises. They are the same which were believed, taught, and earnestly contended for by the Reformers, who learned them from the Scriptures as interpreted and applied by the Spirit.

The truth is one, and the source of it unchangeable. Hence, all who learn it from that source, and come to the

knowledge of it through their experience of its power, will agree substantially in their views of it.

Those doctrines which have been called, by way of distinction, the doctrines of the Reformation, were in the Bible from the beginning. They do not date from that period nor were they then first discovered. They had been always held by true believers, and were held by those who constituted the true Church of Christ during the darkest periods of her history. When a part of what was *called* the Church had apostatized, was in alliance with the world—had substituted vain traditions of men for the truth of God—heathen and childish ceremonies for the simple and spiritual worship required in the gospel of Jesus Christ—the true Church was to be found in the valleys of Piedmont, among the Waldenses and Albigenses, and

among the followers of Wickliffe in different places. Then, as there always has been, there was a remnant according to the election of grace, who did not bow the knee to Baal, and who were kept in the faith and love of the truth.

Those doctrines which have been also called by way of distinction Calvinistic, because they were more methodically arranged by John Calvin, whose name they bear, than they had previously been, and were more clearly and ably expounded by that wonderful man than by others—a man so great, so learned, so wise, and yet so good that his equal has not appeared in the Church since the days of Paul—were the doctrines taught from the word of God by all the Reformers, and were almost universally received by the friends of the Redeemer who lived in those days.

Luther and Calvin agreed substantially

on all matters of faith, excepting as to the manner of the presence of Christ in the sacrament, and as to the divine inspiration of some parts of the Scriptures. Luther taught the doctrine of God's sovereignty, of the divine decrees, of predestination and election, of original sin, of salvation through grace, of justification by faith alone, of the influences of the Spirit on the hearts of sinners in their regeneration and sanctification, and of the perseverance of the saints, as fully, as explicitly, as boldly, and as constantly as Calvin did. He did not consider these doctrines dangerous, and of pernicious tendency—neither did he regard them as mere abstract speculations with which the people of God have nothing to do. They were the sum and substance of the Gospel which he preached, and which God was pleased so remarkably to bless to the salvation of many souls.

It may, perhaps, surprise some, to find these doctrines prominent in all the writings of Luther—expressed at large and without reserve—when it is known that so few of those who are now called by his name, as a distinct religious denomination, agree with him. We may add, also, that these same doctrines which have been so much spoken against, which are regarded with so much prejudice by many, are contained in the Confessions of Faith of most of the leading Protestant Evangelical Churches which have been formed since the Reformation. They are set forth and expressed as explicitly and strongly, in the Articles of Faith and in the Homilies of the Church of England, in the Doctrinal Standards of the Reformed Churches of Holland and of their descendants, as they are in the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of the Westminister Assem-

bly of Divines, and which are the common and publicly-expressed Standards of Faith in all Presbyterian Churches in Great Britain and in the United States.

If there be any peculiarity in the Presbyterian Church on this subject, it is not in having those doctrines in our Confession, and in our professing to believe them, but in our openly preaching and maintaining them. We have no desire to keep our faith of them a secret, nor to withhold them from the people. We feel bound, as honest men, and as commissioned preachers of the Gospel, to declare the whole counsel of God, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. We dare not keep back any of that Scripture which has been given by inspiration of God, and which is profitable for doctrine — for reproof—for correction—for instruction in righteousness. Neither do we feel

any desire to suppress any part of that truth by which God has made himself known, and through the knowledge of which alone, men can be saved. We do not preach it reluctantly, nor by constraint, but willingly, as that through which God is glorified and his people sanctified. We must know God as he is, and we must know of his purposes, of his judgments, and of the methods of his grace, or we cannot know whether we love him, and cordially approve of him as our God. We must also understand the nature of His salvation, and be acquainted with the way in which He bestows it, or we cannot know whether we desire it; nor can we seek after it *intelligently*.

It has been objected by some, even of those who had professed their faith in these doctrines, that the preaching of them would not be for edification, inas-

much as many would be offended at them. But this is only in confirmation of the Scripture which saith that the carnal mind is enmity against God; and that the preaching of Christ crucified, as the only ordinance of God for the salvation of sinners, is a stumbling-block and foolishness. To suppress them for such, or for any reasons, would be to take unwarrantable liberty with the Word of God, and a presumptuous attempt to remove the offence of the cross. We believe that we have no such discretion; but are solemnly bound to be consistent and faithful, to speak as we think, to do as we profess. Besides, if we attempt to please men, we cannot be the servants of God, nor expect his blessing. We know that the wisdom of God is wiser than men. He employs means adapted to the end which they are intended to accomplish. He will

bless his own truth, and will make it efficacious to humble, purify and save men; but not the inventions of human wisdom. Nor can these effects be produced, without a knowledge of the whole truth. If men are, in their hearts, opposed to the truth, and will not hear sound doctrine; if they cannot renounce self; yield their own judgments, wills and prejudices to the teaching of God's spirit; if they are not willing that God should be God—supreme, sovereign and absolute—a just God and a Saviour—we ought not to attempt to deceive them respecting the state of their hearts; nor should they conceal from themselves the melancholy fact that they are unbelievers, have not the love of God in them, and will not have Christ to reign over them. Surely, the sooner they learn to know themselves as not subject to the law of God, the better. We have been

commissioned to make known the God of the Bible, as possessing those attributes and exercising those prerogatives which are peculiar and essential to him; and also the plan of salvation through Jesus Christ, in whom his people were "chosen before the foundation of the world, that they might be holy and without blame before him in love, and who was manifested in these last times for them who by him believe in God." If any are saved, it must be through him, for his is the only name given, under heaven, among men whereby we can be saved. They must be saved; not in a way of their own fancy or choice, and which would gratify their pride, but according to the will of God; not by works of righteousness which they have done, but according to his mercy, according to his purpose and grace, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy

Ghost. We are sent to publish the record which has been committed to us: "that God has given us eternal life, and that this life is in his Son, and that this is eternal life, to know Him who is the only living and true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent." Thus, in teaching our people all which we believe, and in giving them a reason of the hope that is in us, we act under commission, and with a desire to promote the salvation of their souls. If, in doing so, we give offence, we regret it; but we cannot do otherwise than speak the truth; and we will constantly remind those who are offended, that their quarrel is not with us, but with God, whose truth we endeavor to speak in love.

But the distinctive peculiarity of the Presbyterian Church, as such, is to be found in her forms of worship, and in the principles of her government. These

we believe to be also in accordance with the Word of God, and derived immediately from the Scriptures. They are as nearly in conformity with the simple, unadorned and unostentatious worship which was instituted by the Apostles, under the New Testament dispensation, as they can be under our different circumstances. Our mode of *public* prayer, in a *standing* position, and of praise, with Psalms and Hymns, and spiritual songs, in which the whole congregation join—of reading and expounding the Scriptures throughout, and of administering the two only sacraments which have been instituted by the Great Head of the Church, of Baptism and the Lord's Supper—are authorized by the usage of the disciples, and by the express commands of our Saviour and his Apostles. The great Protestant principle, and which is held as fundamental by Pres-

byterians, is, that God alone is Lord of the conscience, "and hath left it free from the doctrine and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to his Word, or beside it in matters of faith and worship." "There is *one God* and one Mediator between God and man—the man Christ Jesus." No being intervenes, or can interpose between us and that Mediator. We have immediate and direct access to Immanuel. As Jehovah incarnate, he comes down to us, and brings us nigh unto him. He is our only Confessor, Teacher, Guide, Counsellor, Saviour, Friend and Portion. No enactments of the Church, whose power is only *ministerial and declarative;* no ecclesiastical legislation; no decrees of councils; no priesthood; no Hierarchy; no Pope, nor creature of the State, can come between us and Jesus Christ, to debar us from his presence, cut us off

from our interest in him, and from our communion with him. This simple truth, when comprehended and appreciated, lifts us above tyranny and oppression, whether civil or ecclesiastical, and gives us a place among the *free*. It is the germ of all true liberty. The knowledge and faith of it have effected a far greater change in the moral character of those who have embraced it, than climate has ever effected in the physical character of the races of the human family, and one by which they may be as *distinctly* marked in their history. The men who have lived in the light of this doctrine, have stood erect like men. They could never be made to bow to arbitrary human authority; they were subject to every ordinance of God, while they breathed the air of heaven and had their conversation there. It was for this the Covenanters of Scotland contended so

long and so nobly. It was their knowledge of this truth which made them what they were—which raised them so far above the world, and placed them so far in advance of their cotemporaries, as it regarded their views of truth, integrity, human rights, civil and religious liberty. They have received the portion in this world which our Saviour declared must be expected by his faithful followers—hatred, persecution and tribulation. They were hunted like wild beasts, and down-trodden, while they lived, and have been caricatured and ridiculed since their death; still, in Christ they had peace. Their testimony and example remain as a monument in honor of their memory and of their attainments through grace, more durable than brass.

The same is true of the Puritans of England, who have been, in some quar-

ters, as much abused as the Covenanters; but who have been also most ably and eloquently defended by those who could appreciate their character, as men to whom, under God, this nation and the world owe so much. It was their immediate, direct and constant intercourse with God, which made them wise, intrepid and mighty in the truth; indifferent to the honors, riches and pleasures of the world; grave in their whole deportment; faithful, upright and conscientiously sincere in all their intercourse; cool and collected under every emergency; determined, persevering and dauntless, in the accomplishment of their purpose; calm and tranquil, peaceful and happy in their death.

We give men the Scriptures, as containing the only infallible rule of faith and practice; to be diligently searched by every individual; to be received and

obeyed on the authority of God; to be interpreted according to the analogy of faith, comparing Scripture with Scripture, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit. This is the method, as we believe, by which God intends graciously to restore man, and elevate him to his true dignity, as an intelligent, moral and responsible being.

We have the ordinary officers which are mentioned in the New Testament, and all which were intended to be permanent in the Church, but no more. God has mercifully preserved us from error, from innovation and corruption in this respect also. We do not believe that the Church has been left without a Head, nor do we belong to a Church without a Head—far from it—but we believe that her glorious Head is in heaven. To this headship of the Church we hold, and can acknowledge no other; nor can we be-

lieve that the Lord Jesus Christ has left any other vicar on earth besides the Holy Spirit, whom he promised to send, and whom he did send, to supply the absence of his human nature, which the heavens must receive, until the time of the restitution of all things. We, therefore, look upon it as worse than mockery, as an impious and presumptuous usurpation, for man to affect, in any form, to act as the Head of the Church, or to perform the office of the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus Christ has left authority, and established government in his Church, but it is *executive* merely. The names, qualifications and duties of those who are to bear rule in his house, and the manner in which they are to be inducted into office, are all mentioned in the Scriptures, and are adopted by us as our guide in these matters.

The Apostles were extraordinary offi-

cers, and as such had no successors. It was essential to the office of an Apostle that the incumbent should have seen the Lord—that he might testify to his resurrection as an eye-witness. To qualify Saul of Tarsus to become an Apostle, a special miracle was wrought. Jesus actually appeared to him. Besides, the Apostles were enabled to perform miracles by which to confirm their divine commission. They could not, therefore, have successors; nor was it necessary that they should have, except as they were Presbyters and Ministers of Christ. That they were such, they themselves declare. Even Peter, who has been made to father all the abominations of Rome, says, "the Elders I exhort who am also an Elder," a co-presbyter, with you; and the Apostle John styles himself "the Elder to the elect lady" in his Epistle. We read in the New

Testament of Bishops who had the oversight, the watch and care of a particular Church or Churches, and who performed the duties of a Pastor to them, but not of Bishops over the Ministers in a certain district. The Lord Jesus Christ is the great shepherd and bishop over Ministers and people. The Bishops spoken of in the Scriptures are Presbyters.

Every reader of the New Testament knows that the terms Bishop and Presbyter are convertible. They are used interchangeably to designate the same officers, who were required to possess the same qualifications, and who were ordained in the same manner. Paul, writing to Titus, says, i., 5, that he had left him in Crete, to ordain Elders, Presbyters, (more than one,) in every city, as he had appointed him; and then describes the character of those who might be ordained, verse 6: "If any be blame-

less, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly," and gives as a reason for this caution in selecting candidates, what follows in the next verse, "For a *Bishop* must be blameless, as the steward of God," &c., thus evidently identifying the office of Presbyter and Bishop. By comparing this passage with what is written in 1 Tim. iii., 1, it will be perceived that the same qualifications which are enumerated as essential to the office of a Bishop, are those which are here named as necessary to the office of a Presbyter. Another instance of the interchangeable use of these terms we have in the well-known passage in Acts xx., 17–28. Paul sent for the *Elders*, the *Presbyters*, of the Church of Ephesus to meet him at Miletum, and enjoined them, among other things, to take heed to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them

overseers, Bishops, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood; but we need not enlarge on this point.

We read, also, of Ruling Elders, who do not labor in the word and doctrine, 1 Tim. v., 17, but who, as helps, have authority to govern in the Church, taking the oversight of the flock in connection with the Pastor, having no authority as such to preach, administer the sacraments, nor to ordain. And we read of Deacons who were appointed, not to preach—not as a distinct order of the ministry, nor to hold an office which is to be a stepping-stone to a higher order—but as officers who were to manage the temporal affairs of the Church; to have the care of the poor, and to dispense to them the charities of the Church. They were appointed expressly to relieve the Preachers of the Gospel from the

duty of serving tables, and to enable those who were Preachers to give themselves "continually to prayer and the Ministry of the Word," Acts vi., 1–4. Besides these, we acknowledge no other permanent officers nor titles of office in the Church, because we do not find them in the Word of God, which is our only directory.

There were Evangelists, as we also ordain Missionaries, without charge for special services in the Church; but they belong to the same order of Ministers of the Gospel, among whom there is a perfect *parity*, according to the command of Christ, Mat. xx., 25–28.

We require the same qualifications in those whom we ordain to these offices, and the performance of the same duties which belong to them respectively, as are specified in the Scriptures. And they are ordained to office, not by a Diocesan Bishop, because there is no

such officer named in the New Testament. There is no account of any one who ever exercised such an office. We do not find the qualifications of such an officer enumerated, nor his duties defined. We therefore have no such officer in our system ; we do not believe in him.

Nor is ordination performed by the people, the body of believers. They have no such power, and cannot confer it on others. There is no instance on record, in the New Testament, in which the people exercised that power. The power and commission to preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments and govern the Church, was not given to the people merely as worshipers, but to the Church, to be exercised by her officers. It comes from above, and is descending; it comes from the Lord Jesus Christ, and is delegated to those whom he has designated as officers in his Church, and

through and by them is it to be imparted to others. The error of those (for I consider it an error and an abandonment of Presbyterianism) who reverse this order, and teach that the people are the source of this power, and that it is ascending in its nature, arises, as it appears to me, from their putting asunder what God has inseparably joined together, viz., the body of the people and the *officers* who are to rule over them. They speak of the Church as distinct from, and in opposition to, the officers of the Church, whereas the Church includes her officers and her Head. Through a fear, as it would seem, of being charged with holding the odious doctrine of succession, they destroy the unity of the Church, divide her into ten thousand independent fragments which may spring up anywhere like mushrooms, having no connection with any that have gone be-

fore them, or that co-exist with them, or that shall come after them; and they subvert the order of Christ's house, leaving these independent societies without a Head and without a government, except as they may be created by themselves. From an examination of the Scriptures, we cannot find that there ever has been a Church without a Ministry. There can be no Church where the Word and sacraments are not administered, and these can be administered by an ordained Ministry only. There have been congregations without Pastors, but they belonged to the Church which had a Ministry. We learn, also, that under the New Testament dispensation, the Ministry was before the Church, in the order of nature and of time; but was given to the Church for her edification. Now it is as easy for God to preserve a succession of Ministers, as it is

to preserve a succession of believers; and it is matter of history that he has done so. As the Church has been preserved through all the changes of time, through all the revolutions of empires, and through all the persecutions of the infuriated world, so has her Ministry been preserved. With them is lodged the power of ordination—of inducting suitable men into the Ministry as their coadjutors and successors. This may be called the doctrine of succession, but it is a very different doctrine from that which teaches that there has been a succession of Popes or an unbroken chain of individual Bishops, ordained after a particular form, who have transmitted, in one line, a certain subtle, mysterious influence and authority, the exercise of which is essential to the validity of all religious administrations, and to salvation. It is the doctrine of the succession

or preservation of the Church, in fulfillment of the promise that "the gates of hell shall never prevail against her," and that the Lord Jesus Christ will be present with her always, even unto the end. It is to maintain "that God cannot lie," and that the Scriptures cannot be broken, He has appointed offices to be executed by a distinct class and a separate order of men. To fill those offices, persons were ordained by the Apostles, with an injunction to ordain others. On them rests the responsibility of looking out and training up others, and with them is lodged the power of ordaining them. "The things that thou hast heard of me," says Paul to Timothy, "among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful *men* who shall be able to teach *others also*," 2 Tim. ii. 2. It may be asked, Have the people no voice? have they no rights? Unquestionably; they elect their own

officers, they choose their own Pastors, and no one can be placed over them, in the Lord, without their consent; yet their spiritual Rulers and Teachers must be inducted into office by the existing Ministry, just as it was in the case of the Deacons of whose appointment we have an account in the Acts vi., 5, 6. The people were required to make the selection of suitable persons; the choice was left entirely to them: but after they had been thus designated and elected by the people, the Apostles ordained them; and as it is in a manner in our civil affairs, the people *elect* their own officers, but they do not invest them with office. They are inducted into office and clothed with the authority of it, by the existing government.

Our Ministers are ordained by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. 1 Tim. iv., 14: "Neglect not

the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery." Ruling Elders and Deacons are ordained by the Pastor of the Church in which they are to serve.

Thus it appears that our government is not monarchical; it is not administered by a single individual: it cannot, therefore, be despotic nor arbitrary. It is not aristocratical; the power is not placed in the hands of a ew self-constituted officers, who act independently of the people, who are under no responsibility to them, who may perpetuate themselves, and from whose decision there is no appeal. The Pastor and the officers of particular Churches are not chosen by their predecessors, nor are they placed over congregations in an arbitrary manner by the Presbytery, but are regularly called by

the people. Every member of the Church has an equal privilege in this respect, having a voice in the election of those who are to be over him in the Lord.

Here we may notice the salutary check which the Presbytery and the people mutually hold upon each other. If, on the one hand, the people should, at will, *ordain* their own minister, who would be accountable for his doctrine and life to them only, the greatest abuses might be practiced, under the garb of religion. They might be influenced by the most unworthy motives, in the selection of an individual to become their Pastor; and if he could succeed to render himself acceptable—if he should become popular, on account of his talents, style of writing, or eloquence, he might preach his own speculations instead of the Gospel, or himself instead of Christ, and his conduct be connived at notwithstanding.

He might privily introduce error, and seduce the people from the simplicity that is in Christ, and yet they would sustain him. This is matter of history. In this way men have "brought in damnable heresy, even denying the Lord that bought them," and have corrupted some of the fairest portions of God's heritage. In some instances, also, the grossest immoralities have been countenanced by a people, in their favorite Preacher. We are told expressly, that those who have itching ears, who are actuated by a spirit of self-pleasing, will, after their own lusts, heap to themselves Teachers.

On the other hand, if the Presbytery should, at will, ordain persons who had not been tried by the Churches, who had never been called to the work of the Ministry by any of the people of God, they might add indefinitely to their own number, and burden the Churches. They

would destroy the balance of power in the Presbytery, which is now equally divided between the *Ministers* and the Ruling Elders, who are the representatives of the people; and whenever the people are not represented in Church courts, and where their will is not consulted, there may they expect to be Priest-ridden and oppressed.

Nor is our government a pure Democracy; it is constitutional; it is uniform, according to fixed principles; and it is orderly subject to the *authority* of the one great Head of the Church. We have laws, with their sanctions and officers, by whom they are to be executed, and who are clothed with power to preserve the purity and peace of the Church.

It is, in many respects, analogous and most congenial to the free and happy civil government under which we live, and may, with propriety, be called a

Representative Republican Government, under which there is no respect of persons. It is the same form of government which was established in the primitive Churches, and we know, from history, that it is the same which the Reformers established, wherever circumstances permitted them to do so, and which they *intended* to establish in all the Churches which were, through their instrumentality, delivered from the darkness, idolatry and abominations of Popery. Luther, Calvin and Knox, with their coadjutors, were all Presbyterians. They were of one mind on this subject, as well as of one spirit, and designed to establish a uniform government in the Church, as they did set forth a uniform faith. The continuation of Prelacy in England was owing entirely to the circumstances under which the Reformation was introduced into that country. The civil gov-

ernment was monarchical, analogous and most friendly to which is Prelacy.

The reigning monarch at the time, who had received from the Pope the title of "Defender of the Faith," as a reward for the book he had written in Latin against Luther, found it afterwards convenient and desirable, in order to accomplish certain domestic arrangements, to have himself acknowledged the Head of the Church, instead of, and in opposition to, the Pope at Rome, with whom he had quarreled. Henry VIII., that he might be divorced from one wife, and married to another—and, without having changed his religious sentiments—was accordingly so proclaimed, and therefore it was that the English Church only exchanged one Pope for another. At the present time their sovereign Queen is the *Head of their Church*, as her predecessors have

been. The Reformation there was checked, and the government of the Church was continued much in the same form as it had been under the Pope, being administered by the same Bishops who, until then, had adhered to Rome, and many of whom were still in heart Papists, as some of their successors have been ever since. Those who were truly Protestants, and who cordially embraced the doctrines of the Reformation, petitioned and labored hard for the Presbyterian form of Church government. They complained and remonstated against the objectionable forms and usages which were retained during successive reigns, until, by cruel acts of conformity, attempts at coercion and bloody persecutions, they were driven from their native land, some to the continent of Europe, and others to these shores where God had prepared an asylum for them. Now we say

it is matter of thankfulness that the Presbyterian Church has been preserved from changes, innovations and corruptions in her doctrine, government and usages, to bear her testimony to the truth. She is the same in these respects now, that she was in the days of the Reformation, and in the days of the Apostles.

By her primitive simplicity, and the form of her constitution, she is peculiarly adapted to be a most useful and efficient agent in the preservation and propagation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, among all classes of persons, and in all time. She has no outward attractions nor imposing forms, and never has had; her worship is without pomp or show, and, as we believe on that account, more solemn and spiritual, and less liable to abuse. Where people are attracted by the outward circumstances of religious worship,

and where they can unite in it without preparation and without an effort of the mind—without the exercise of the heart and of the affections, as is the case where written forms are used—they are in great danger of deceiving themselves with a name to live, of trusting in the forms of godliness, of indulging in a self-righteous spirit, of feeling self-complacency, and of crying peace when there is no peace. It is a cheap and easy way of quieting conscience, and of keeping upon good terms with ourselves. At the same time we do not say that it is necessarily so—by no means—we know it is not—we only say that it is peculiarly liable to this abuse.

There can be no better organization than ours for the promotion of education and the improvement of the condition of men—for the diffusion of intelligence, the preservation of the pub-

lic morals, the elevation of the standard of piety, nor for the preaching of the Gospel to every creature, than *this which* God has given us. It is fully competent to every benevolent operation, and wherever it has been faithfully administered and fully carried into effect, it has been proved efficient to accomplish these important objects.

The Ministers of the Presbyterian Church have, for the most part, been pious, educated and devoted men, and have contributed their full proportion of labor and influence to the cause of education and to the work of spreading the Gospel. No branch of the Church has done more for the establishment of schools and the diffusion of knowledge, for the instruction of youth and of the members of her communion. Those who have been educated under her care, who have had the advantage

of her Catechetical instruction in the family and in the sanctuary, who regularly hear the Scriptures expounded and applied, unless they have been most culpably inattentive and negligent, will be found intelligent on the most important subjects of their duty, familiarly acquainted with their Bibles and with the great principles of the Reformation.

The influence of this system, in the formation of character, may be learned from the spirit which has characterized those who have embraced it. They have ever been the advocates of human rights, of freedom in all its forms, and of the largest liberty. They have cherished and inculcated enlarged views of all those great practical subjects which have agitated society, and which affect human happiness, and the most liberal principles of action and of intercourse. Hence, they have, in every country and in every

age, as a denomination generally, been true patriots, loyal to the government under which they lived, and supporters of the laws and of the constitution by which they were bound. In the history of the changes and revolutions which have occurred in the nations among whom their lot has been cast, they have ever been found resisting oppression by all lawful means, maintaining the cause of truth and righteousness, and contending for liberty of conscience.

They have been charged, but most unjustly, with bigotry and with too great rigor in adhering to their doctrine and discipline. No religious sect has been, nor is any evangelical denomination of Christians at this moment, so Catholic as Presbyterians are in their spirit, in their judgment of Christian character, and in their practice as it respects holding communion with the members of

other denominations whom they consider to be united to Christ, the living Head. They are candid, frank and honest, and desire to be consistent, which may give them the appearance, to some, of exclusiveness, but it is the appearance only. They require of those who are to become her permanent members—who are to be regularly admitted into her communion—and to remain as constituent parts of her family—an acquaintance with her doctrines, and an approbation of them, as well as evidence of piety—and they require of those who seek to be ordained as her Ministers or officers, a cordial adoption of her public standards.

To pursue a different course, could not be for peace or edification. They owe it to themselves—to the truth—and to their living Head to be loyal. But they do not judge nor denounce those

who differ from them—they leave all to stand or fall to their own master. They accord to all cheerfully that which they ask for themselves, liberty of conscience. They feel a strong preference for their own peculiar system—they have embraced it from a conviction of its excellence, and of its conformity to the Word of God—but they do not regard the adoption of it as essential to salvation. Neither have they any desire to obtrude it or to impose it upon others as the condition of salvation. We might say much of the salutary influence of this system on individual character, and on the morals of the community in those countries where it has been received and appreciated—but we forbear. What we have said of it has not been in a spirit of boasting, but from a sense of duty to God and man—to testify to its divine

origin, and to the kind interposition of Providence for its preservation.

We are aware that the adherence of numbers to a system is not in itself evidence of its truth or excellence. The mere fact that a society holding certain sentiments is numerous, is no evidence in itself that they have the truth, or that they are approved of God. The wicked have hitherto outnumbered the righteous in our world—false religions have had more votaries than the true—impostors have numbered more followers than the divinely commissioned Teachers of God. But when a system is open to examination and investigation—attending which there is no concealment—when it has stood the test of strong opposition and of violent persecutions—when it has other evidence of a divine origin, and can record palpable tokens

of the divine approbation—then its having been embraced by many intelligent minds in different parts of the globe during successive centuries—and its being still embraced by numbers who can all testify to its salutary influence, entitles it to our confidence.

We think we have in the nature of this system, and in the character of its doctrines, evidence that it came from God, and that, in the history of its preservation, we have evidence of divine interposition. It is not a system formed to please men, to flatter their pride, nor is it lax and indulgent, conniving at sin; but it is intended to save men from their sins, and, therefore, does it lay the axe at the root of them all—self must be denied and renounced—pride must be mortified and humbled. Those who embrace it are required to become fools for Christ, to consent to be esteemed so by others, and

to acknowledge that they know nothing as they ought to know until they learn of him that they have no righteousness, and can never establish any of their own—that they are not sufficient of themselves so much as to think anything of themselves—that they must be saved by grace and remain forever unprofitable servants. Would the human mind ever have invented such a system of doctrine and of religion, in which there is no self-pleasing and from which all boasting of man is taken away, and all glorying of the flesh is effectually and forever excluded? or would the carnal mind in its unchanged state ever embrace it? We can account from natural causes for the preservation of those systems which teach that men can obtain salvation by their own works—that, to be a member of the visible Church, and to give alms will entitle to

a place in heaven. Men will cheerfully submit to the greatest privations, and make any sacrifices if, by so doing, they can quiet conscience and, as they imagine, make out a title to eternal life. This is the secret of the success of false Teachers. They allow their followers to act from a principle of self-pleasing—to be seen of men to gain the reputation of eminent piety and the respect which appertains to it. They teach that penance is the price of absolution—that working is the procuring cause of future blessedness—thus pride is not mortified, but cherished, and the sinner feels himself a debtor to no one but himself. Such is not the doctrine of Christ; according to his teaching there is no promise of saintship, nor of Elysian fields in the future world, as the reward of meritorious personal acts performed here, or of mortifications and sacrifices

self-imposed. All hope of obtaining justification by the works of the law is cut off. The sinner must condemn himself and give God the glory—he must become a debtor to his rich and sovereign grace —he must live by faith and not by sight, and, therefore, must be operated upon by an influence more powerful than can be exerted by human motives to make the sacrifice. Hence, we believe that the Presbyterian Church has been preserved by the influence of the Spirit of God on the hearts of men, making them willing in the day of his power to deny themselves as it regards pride, self-confidence and self-righteousness, and to take up their cross and to follow Christ.

It is thus he has graciously continued a succession of Ministers and Elders in her, and added to her members. He has, at times, so manifested his presence and his saving power in the conversion of

multitudes, that disinterested and competent witnesses were constrained to testify to the reality and greatness of the work, saying, It is the Lord. But for such times of refreshing, the Presbyterian, and every branch of the true Church of Christ, would long ere this have become extinct.

There are seasons of revival in which numbers are brought under deep and pungent convictions of sin—are led cordially to embrace the peculiar doctrines of grace, and to rest upon Christ alone for salvation; and when the subjects of this gracious influence exhibit in their lives an entire change of character—a change of spirit, of nature and habits. The Spirit of God comes not in the mighty wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the still small voice of the Gospel. He descends like the dew and like the rain, to secure the preservation

of the Church in this world, which, under all the circumstances of the case, is a greater miracle than any of those recorded in the Bible.

In the next place, I wish to show you that we have just cause of gratitude to God for his preservation of and gracious dealings with this Church, of which we are the members and few remaining representatives, but must reserve this part of our subject to be considered this afternoon, when I propose, by leave of Providence, to give a brief history of the First Presbyterian Church in this city.

In the meanwhile, let us learn to appreciate our privileges and to improve them. We have an open Bible and liberty of conscience. We may all have access to God, through Jesus Christ without let or hindrance.

Let us, through grace, exhibit in our lives the legitimate fruits of the Gospel.

Let us hold it fast, and transmit it pure and unadulterated, giving glory to God in the highest, that he has been pleased to make known the terms of peace on earth and his good will to men.

DISCOURSE II.

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TEXT.—PSALM CXXIV. 1-3,—"If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say; If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us: Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us."

IT hath pleased God to establish a Church in our world, and to pledge his truth and faithfulness, as well as his omnipotence, for her preservation. She is built upon a rock, and that rock is Christ. When Peter professed his faith in Him as the Son of the living God, Jesus said, "Upon this rock"—*i. e.*, upon myself, who am elsewhere in the Scriptures expressly called the rock—upon this essential and eternal truth, that I am the Christ, the Son of

the living God—upon this, as upon a rock—"will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against her." Intimating that the attempt to destroy her would be made—that she must expect the assaults of hell—but that they would be in vain. Hence the Church is also said to be built upon the Apostles and Prophets, "Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." On another occasion our Lord made known to his disciples the reason why the enemies of the Church should be unsuccessful. He revealed the means of her preservation, and the secret of her safety in the promise, "Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Hitherto this promise has been fulfilled; she has been assaulted—she has been hated, opposed, and persecuted—but she has lived through all the tribulations and dangers which her enemies

have occasioned her, and through all the storms and revolutions of time.

The Church is *one,* and has ever been the same in her doctrines and laws; she has ever been emphatically the light of the world and the salt of the earth, exclusively furnishing the knowledge of the one only living and true God, and of Jesus Christ the only Saviour, and exerting a conservative and sanctifying influence. We speak now of the *true* Church which holds forth the word of life, which performs her appropriate functions, and accomplishes the great end of her organization. Which proclaims by her Ministry a full and free salvation through a crucified Redeemer—keeping pure and accessible to all the fountain which has been opened for sin and for uncleanness—and imparting to all the knowledge of its efficacy. Which executes the great commission of her ascend-

ed Lord—" to preach the Gospel to every creature;" and by letting her light shine before men—by carrying the bread and the water of life to the destitute, " makes glad the wilderness and the solitary place, and causes the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose." It becomes us on the present occasion to recall to our minds the great, gracious and paramount design of our Lord in establishing his Church, and the glorious work which is to be accomplished through her agency, viz., the manifestation of his perfections, the display of his glory in the salvation of sinners. Each separate branch of the Church should be as a light shining in a dark place—as a fountain sending forth living and healing waters—as a tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. May we not say in truth, and without boasting, and ought we not to say with thankfulness that such has

been the character, in *some* degree, at least, and such has been the agency to some extent, of *this Church*, whose new place of worship we have been permitted this day to open here. We think it will appear also from a brief history of the origin, trials and persecutions, of the kind preservation, and salutary influence of this Church, that we may apply to her the language of the text.

In January, 1707—one hundred and thirty-nine years ago—the first movement was made which led to the organization of a Presbyterian Church in this city. The inhabitants, at that time, consisted principally of Dutch Calvinists, who worshiped after the forms of the Church of Holland; of French Refugees, who worshiped after the Geneva model; and of Episcopalians, who worshiped according to the forms of the Church of England. Besides these, there were a

few Presbyterians, who came together on the Sabbath, and worshiped God in a private house. They had no public place of worship, and were without a Minister to lead in their devotions, to preach the Gospel, or to administer the sacraments to them. They were thus early taught, what it was to be strangers, and to be as sheep without a Shepherd, that they might ever after sympathize with those who should be found in the same situation. In the month and year already named, two Presbyterian ministers, Francis McKemmie and John Hampton—from the eastern shore of Maryland—on their way to Boston, visited New York. As was most natural, under the circumstances of the case, the little flock, who were of the same faith with them, desired to hear them preach.

That they might enjoy this privilege, they made application to the consistory

of the Dutch Church for the use of their place of worship, which was cheerfully granted. But there was another personage to be consulted. The people, in those days, had a master, and one who was not backward to let them know that he was their master. It was necessary to obtain permission from the Governor of the Province, who, at that time, was Lord Cornbury. He refused to grant the permission. Having been forbidden to preach in the Dutch Church, Mr. McKemmie preached in a private house in Pearl street, and also baptized a child. For performing these ministerial acts without a license from his Lordship, both he and his companion were arrested, brought before the Governor, and by his order cast into prison. They were kept in confinement nearly two months, when they were brought before the Chief Justice by a writ of habeas

corpus. Mr. Hampton, not having preached in the city, was discharged, and Mr. McKemmie admitted to bail. In June following, he returned from Virginia to New York, to answer his prosecution before the civil court, and although, after a hearing of the case, he was acquitted by the jury, yet he was obliged to pay the costs of suit, amounting to a considerable sum, £83, 7*s*., 6*d*. He afterwards published an account of the trial, in a pamphlet form, a sketch of which may also be found in Smith's History of New York. Thus, in their first movement towards the attainment of their object, in their first attempt to obtain the administration of the Word and ordinances of God, the Presbyterians in this city met with opposition and persecution. This taught them what they were to expect, reminded them that in the world they must have tribulation,

and prepared them for the series of discouragements which followed. This treatment, however, did not change their sentiments, nor did it disperse the little flock; but only retarded the consummation of their devout and earnest desires. In consequence of it, they were kept in a weak and unorganized state for ten years. We hear of no one of their own denomination attempting to preach to them during all that period. Still they were not permitted to abandon their enterprise. God had an important work for them to do in this city. They must not, therefore, cover their light, deny their principles, and do violence to their conscience, by quietly and passively uniting with other Christian denominations.

Much as we deprecate the division of feeble communities into various religious sects, on account of slight differ-

ences of opinion, by reason of which they deprive themselves of the regular ministrations of the Gospel, an evil which is deeply felt and extensively deplored in most of the villages and country towns throughout our land, and while we would inculcate the union of all who agree in the fundamental truths of revelation, and hold the same Head, we could never justify an abandonment of vital principles and of essential truths, nor a compromise with error. Besides, if we would enlist men of different nations, feelings, sentiments and habits, which are not sinful, in the service of God, we must respect even their religious *prejudices*, much more their honest preferences; and Christian union does not consist in outward uniformity, but in sustaining the same relation to Jesus Christ, and in possessing his spirit. It has, no doubt, been *promoted* in the pres-

ent state of society, by allowing different creeds, and names, and forms of worship to exist unmolested. There have been, and still are, many active and useful members of the Church, in their respective religious societies, who are engaged in their different departments, in the performance of an important work to the cause of Christ, who contribute their full proportion of means and influence towards the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom in the world, but who, speaking after the manner of men, would do nothing, if Israel were not divided into different tribes, and moving under separate banners. Hence, it is a mistake to suppose that the dispersion or extinction of any one or more of the different religious denominations, or the closing of their churches, would be a gain to that amount to the remaining denominations. We have

reason to fear that many would not act at all, if they were not permitted to choose their own communion, and if they could not be indulged in their peculiar preferences. It is in this as in almsgiving; if there were but one object of charity, all would not contribute to it, nor would it be better supported when presented alone, than it is, when presented in company with others, which commend themselves respectively to the minds and sympathy of different individuals.

We may, in this connection, notice another mistake, arising from want of consideration on the subject of building and supporting separate Churches. We hear persons lament the expenditure of large sums of money in the erection of costly buildings for places of worship, when there are so many destitute of the means of grace, taking for granted that the sums thus expended

are taken from the fund which would be appropriated to supply the destitute; in other words, that it is robbing the poor to gratify the rich. But this is a great mistake: if these sums were not thus expended, they would not be applied to the destitute—they would either be withheld, or expended on objects less deserving. Besides, in some cases, the restrictions of the charter, under which funds are held, prohibit the application of them to any other use. Surely the house in which we worship God should bear some proportion, as to its price and appearance, to the houses we inhabit. Shall we dwell in ceiled houses and in palaces, and by our neglect of the house of God, seem to say that any structure, the humblest and plainest, is good enough for the Lord! Rather let us bring him a costly offering, if we can do so without robbery or injustice, and let us do it

with the same motive which actuated "the woman who broke the alabaster box of very precious ointment wherewith she anointed her Lord," and then, though we may be censured by men as she was, yet, like her, we shall be commended by our master, and have our offering accepted.

We may lament, on some accounts, to see separate action for the promotion of kindred benevolent objects, and separate ecclesiastical organizations to effect one and the same great end, yet who does not know, that in the existing state of the world, they are necessary, and have been overruled by Infinite Wisdom, to accomplish a vastly larger amount of good than would ever have been accomplished without them? Can any of us now regret the separate organization of the Presbyterian Church in this city? Would it have been better for the city,

for the country, and for the world, if those individuals who first sought it had yielded their preferences, and united themselves in Christian fellowship with the existing religious denominations? He who saw the end from the beginning thought not so; we who know something of the results of that organization, of the amount of salutary and saving influence which has been exerted by it, in the formation of Christian character and in the bringing of multitudes of immortal souls into the kingdom of God, cannot think so. We regard with the deepest interest and with the liveliest emotions of gratitude, that little germ of Presbyterianism, that little vine which was then planted, that little rill which then took its rise.

That germ has become a sturdy tree, that vine has been preserved and watered, and has shot forth its branches, bear-

ing many clusters; we are permitted to sit under its branches and to partake of its fruit—that little rill has, by the blessing of God, become a fertilizing river, and is still widening and deepening its channels as it flows.

In 1717, John Nicholl, Patrick McKnight, Gilbert Livingston and Thomas Smith, with a few others, formed the design of erecting themselves into a congregation, and of establishing the public worship of God among them, according to the doctrines and usages of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. In pursuance of this design, they called the Rev. James Anderson, who was a native of Scotland, educated and ordained there, but at the time was a member of the Presbytery of Philadelphia. This sufficiently contradicts the assertion which has been published to the world, that this was originally a Congregational

Church. If more is necessary, to prove the character of the Church, we have it in the Records of the Session, and of the Trustees, and in the several public documents relating to this congregation. There is a pamphlet still extant, under the title of the "Case of the Scotch Presbyterians of New York," containing the petitions of the Church, presented at different times, for an act of incorporation, in which they style themselves "The Presbyterian Congregation," and afterwards more fully "The Presbyterian Church of the City of New York, according to the Westminster Confession of Faith, Catechism and Directory, agreeable to the Established Church of Scotland:" also containing the names of the Ministers, of the Elders, of the Deacons, and of the Trustees of the Church at the time, showing a perfect Presbyterian organization. It is true, that there was,

at one time, a division in the congregation, on the subject of Church order, resulting in a temporary secession of a small minority. Some of those who were in favor of New England usages, separated from the Church, and obtained the services of an independent minister of the Gospel, the Rev. Mr. Edwards, as a supply for one winter. But afterwards finding themselves too feeble in numbers and resources, to continue as an independent Church, they were disbanded, most of them returning to the Church which they had left, and which continued unchanged. Mr. Anderson and his people met at first for the public worship of God in the City Hall—then standing at the corner of Nassau and Wall streets—the use of which was granted them by the corporation of the city. The next year, 1718, they purchased a lot of ground in Wall Street,

and in 1719, erected their first building for a place of worship. To defray the expense thus incurred, they adopted the expedient which has been so generally practiced ever since, of sending abroad for aid. A Delegation was sent into the Colony of Connecticut, who obtained permission from the Governor to make collections; and Dr. Nicholl went to Scotland, where he received a considerable sum, by order of the General Assembly of that Church.

In 1720 they made their first application for a charter. Their petition was presented to Mr. Schuyler, President of the Board, who appeared friendly to their object, and the Council reported in favor of granting their request. But they were defeated by the officious interference and opposition of the Vestry of the Episcopal Church. A member of the Vestry of Trinity Church appeared before the

Council, to oppose the granting of a charter.

Shortly after this, a new Governor having arrived, they renewed their application, which was again denied, through the influence of the same hostile party. Instead of mentioning in detail, and according to their dates, the repeated subsequent applications which were made at different times for this boon, so reasonable in itself, which might have been so easily and so safely granted, and which was of so much importance to the parties seeking it; and without animadverting on the pains that were taken and the artifice practiced to defeat the several applications, or on the unmanly, ungenerous and unchristian spirit of those who diligently, perseveringly and obstinately resisted them; we may remark here, once for all, that the Vestry of Trinity Church had influence

enough at court—which they never neglected to exert—to prevent the Presbyterian Church in this city, for more than half a century, from obtaining a charter of incorporation. We mention this as matter of history, and we trust without any unkind feelings, either towards the living or the dead. During the whole of that period the Presbyterians were subject to great inconvenience and injury, and in danger of having their property wrested from them. There were legacies left them which they could not receive, and the avails of which were diverted to other purposes than those for which they were intended. Meanwhile they were obliged to pay their full proportion of the expense of supporting the established religion. In this emergency, having no prospect of obtaining a charter, by which they might enjoy, as an incorporated body, a right to their

church and cemetery; deeming them unsafe in private hands, especially considering the insidious treatment they had received from those who were hostile to them, and taking warning by what had occurred at Jamaica, on Long Island, where the property of the Presbyterians had been actually taken from them by the Episcopalians; and being also alarmed by the attempts which had been made to wrest from the hands of an individual the amount of a legacy which he held in trust for the Presbyterian Church, they determined to vest the fee of their church and ground in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, to secure them against any similar attempt to alienate them from the pious uses for which they were intended. The trust was accepted and held temporarily by the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Mod-

erator of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, the Professor of Divinity therein, and the Procurator and Agent of the Church of Scotland. After the Revolution, these gentlemen reconveyed the property, setting forth the purposes for which it was to be used, to the Trustees of the Church.

In illustration of how much may be done towards sustaining a Church, by a single individual, to whom God gives a heart and mind for his service—and also in justice to the memory of the dead—it may be mentioned, that the whole management of the temporal affairs of this Church, during the most troublous and trying times of her history, was entrusted, almost entirely, to Dr. Nicholl.

All testified to his singular attention, diligence, assiduity, fidelity and perseverance in promoting the interests of the Presbyterian Church in this city, and to

his success in sustaining them during his life. He has left behind him this honorable testimony, That he was as eminent for his piety as a Christian, as he was for his skill as a physician, and that the Presbyterian interest in this city is more indebted to him than to any individual who ever belonged to it.

In a sermon preached on the occasion of his death, by the pastor of the Church at the time, it is said, "These walls will be a lasting monument of his zeal for the house and public worship of God, in the erecting of which he spent a considerable part of his estate, and undertook a hazardous voyage to Europe for the establishment and security of this infant society. Upon these and other accounts too numerous to be mentioned, while a Presbyterian Church subsists in the city of New York, the name of Nicholl will ever be remembered with honor, as

one of its principal founders and its greatest benefactors." The secret of his usefulness and success was to be found, under God, in the interest which he felt in the Church. He set his heart upon the work of promoting her prosperity, and did not allow his mind to be diverted from it by any personal considerations, nor by the petty and pitiful jealousies which might be felt or expressed respecting him. He appreciated Church privileges for himself, and comprehended their importance to others. He did not, however, wait for others to take the lead in perpetuating them—nor refuse to act because others would not co-operate with him. He did not say, "I can do without a Church if they can do without it;" but acting under a sense of his individual and personal responsibility, he adopted the resolution of Joshua—to the effect that whatever others might

do, as for him and his house they would serve the Lord—yea, he redeemed the time and did with his might what his hands found to do for God.

In 1726, Mr. Anderson accepted a call from a Church in Pennsylvania, leaving the Church in this city vacant.

In 1727, they called and received as their Pastor, the Rev. Ebenezer Pemberton.

It was during his ministry that the celebrated and highly-honored servant of God, the Rev. George Whitefield, visited this country. Mr. Pemberton was the only Clergyman in this city who opened his Church doors to him, and invited him into his pulpit, for which he was abundantly recompensed of God.

The preaching of Mr. Whitefield in Wall street, proved a great blessing to the Church; a number of highly respectable individuals and families were

brought into the congregation through his instrumentality, and both the Pastor and the Church were greatly and permanently revived. In consequence of the great increase of the Church at that time, it became necessary to enlarge their place of worship, which was done in 1748. On that occasion, a committee was sent to Boston to procure a stone with a Latin inscription, commemorative of the event, the translation of which is as follows, "Under favor of God—this edifice—sacred to the perpetual celebration of Divine worship—first erected in 1719—again thoroughly repaired and built larger and more beautiful in 1748. The Presbyterians of New York founding—for their own and their children's use—have given, presented and dedicated—and more illustriously adorned by religion, concord, love and the purity of faith, worship and discipline. May it by favor

of Christ endure to many generations." This stone has been preserved.

The following inscription was placed in the wall over the magistrate's pew, also in Latin. "Under the auspices of George II., King of Great Britain, Patron of the Church, and Defender of the Faith."

From this we may learn something of the state of things at that time, of the interest which was felt in the cause of religion, and of the pains which were taken in building the house of God.

But the increase of the Church was not the only blessing which was sent them in return for their hospitable and courteous reception of Mr. Whitefield. His preaching in a neighboring city was under God, the means of the conversion of one, who subsequently became their Pastor, and served them as such with great fidelity and success for more than

half a century—one who exerted a more extensive influence for good—received more honor as a laborer in the Word and doctrine of Christ, and who is recollected by those who knew him with more affection than any who has ever served them in the ministry. His biographer informs us, that on one occasion, when Mr. Whitefield was preaching in Philadelphia in the open air, as he frequently did, young Rodgers, then a lad of about twelve years of age, was among his hearers, when the following incident, which is familiar to many of you, occurred. To show his respect for his favorite Preacher, he approached near him and held a lantern for his accommodation. He soon became so absorbed in the subject of the discourse—was so deeply impressed and so agitated, that he was scarcely able to stand. Under this excitement, he unconsciously allowed the lantern to fall,

by which it was broken and the light extinguished. The circumstance, of course, attracted the notice of those who were near, and of the speaker at the time.

The impressions he then received were confirmed and deepened, and resulted, as he believed, in his conversion.

During the fifth visit of Mr. Whitefield to America, which occurred some years after, he had occasion to visit the place where Mr. Rodgers (who in the meantime had been prepared for, and admitted into the ministry) was settled as a Pastor. When riding with him one day, in the course of conversation, Mr. Rodgers asked him whether he recollected the incident in the case of the little boy who became so much affected under his preaching as to let his lantern fall? Mr. Whitefield replied that he did, and had often thought he would

give almost anything to know who he was, and what had become of him. Mr. Rodgers replied, I am that little boy. The emotions of Mr. Whitefield can better be conceived than described, when he affectionately embraced him, and with tears of joy remarked that Mr. Rodgers was the fourteenth person then in the ministry whom he had discovered in the course of that visit to America, of whose hopeful conversion he had been the instrument.

The congregation continuing to increase, in 1750 they called Mr. Alexander Cummings—a Licentiate of the Presbytery of Newcastle—to be a colleague with Mr. Pemberton. He accepted their call, was ordained, and entered on the duties of his office.

Shortly after this, serious and painful difficulties occurred in the congregation, which resulted in the resignation of both

Ministers. The causes of these were various. Doubtless they might in part be traced to the hasty admissions into the Church of some who were not rooted and grounded in the truth, and who felt no attachment to the Presbyterian Church, as such. The Ministers at that time had allowed a departure from the order of the Presbyterian Church. Mr. Pemberton had been educated in New England, and could not be expected to sympathize with those of his congregation who came from Scotland and Ireland. He allowed the office of Ruling Elder to go into disuse, and required their duties to be performed by the Deacons and Trustees. Mr. Cummings accepted a call from a Congregational Church, from which we may infer that he, too, preferred that form of Church government.

They also attempted to introduce Watt's version of the Psalms, with his

Hymns, which occasioned a warm and protracted contest. Besides, they immediately experienced the evils of having more than one Minister over the same Pastoral charge—each having their adherents and followers. Evils which they continued to feel during their subsequent history, in a greater or less degree, until the collegiate system was discontinued.

The congregation remained vacant for a considerable time, in consequence of their divided state. The subject of their difficulties was referred to the synod—a committee of that body visited them, and endeavored to restore peace and harmony. In the meantime, they made four different attempts to obtain a Minister, and were disappointed. The fifth person whom they called was the Rev. David Bostwick, of Jamaica, L. I. After much opposition on the part of his people, and consequent delay, he accept-

ed their call, and became their Pastor in 1756. In the early part of his ministry, which was popular, acceptable, and highly successful, a portion of the dissatisfied members of the Church seceded and formed the First Associate Reformed Church, in Cedar street—now the Scotch Presbyterian Church in Grand street. After that separation the remaining Church was left in peace and quietness in their own communion.

In 1762, they purchased a parsonage house for Mr. Bostwick—and also called the Rev. Joseph Treat, of the Presbytery of New Brunswick, to be his colleague. The next year, in 1763, Mr. Bostwick was removed from them by death, after a few days' illness—having been much beloved and highly esteemed by all who knew him.

In 1765, they called the Rev. John Rodgers, to whom they had before ap-

a very different spirit towards the Pres-
plied in 1754, but who then declined their invitation. Mr. Rodgers accepted their second call, entered on the duties of his office in July, and was installed as Pastor in September, of that year. Again the Church was revived, prospered, and greatly increased. It became necessary to procure a second place of worship. A lot was accordingly obtained at the corner of Nassau and Beekman streets, on a perpetual lease, from the Corporation of the City, upon which a new building was erected. This second place of worship was opened and dedicated to the worship of God in January, 1768.

The members of the Presbyterian Church in this city, and throughout the colonies, were, with few exceptions, attached to the American cause in the Revolutionary struggle for the liberties and Independence of the country. In consequence of this, most of the mem-

bers of the First Church went with their Ministers into exile at the commencement of the war. We need not add that there was no advancement in religion—no increase nor extension of the Church during the war. Just as was the cause of it, all was havoc, desolation and ruin during its continuance—the necessary concomitants of war under any circumstances.

On their return to the city, after an absence of some seven years, they found that the church edifice in Wall street had been used by the British as barracks for their soldiers, and the one in Beekman street as a hospital. Both were left in such an injured and ruinous state as to be utterly unfit for occupancy as places of worship. The Parsonage house belonging to the church had also been burnt.

The Episcopalians (whose churches had not been injured at all) manifested

byterians after the Revolution, from that which had characterized their treatment of them before that event. They had been supported by the State, allied with the government, and in favor at court. They had been in the ascendency—but they were now a small minority—and it was a question with them, no doubt, whether they were to be tolerated. They had become, in their turn, as they have been ever since in this country, the Dissenters. They generally, with a few honorable exceptions, dissented from the patriots of the Revolution—from the policy and movements of the successful and predominant portion of our citizens, who, under God, achieved our Independence—from the principles of our free government, and of all our popular institutions. If the Presbyterians had felt disposed to follow their example, and had desired a national reli-

gion, established by law, they might have obtained it. But they were opposed to such an arrangement from principle; and it was owing to their influence—especially to the influence of those evangelical Ministers of the Gospel who were opposed to Prelacy—that the Constitution of the United States on that subject was framed as it is—favoring no one religious denomination, but protecting all. Their petitions, drawn up with great ability—their papers, containing their firm, powerful and decided remonstrance against a union of the Church with the State—are still extant; from which it appears that they entertained as enlightened, enlarged, liberal and disinterested views on this subject, as any that have been expressed since, and which were creditable alike to their heads and their hearts.

The Vestry of Trinity Church now

unsolicited offered the Presbyterians the use of St. Paul's and of St. George's churches, until one of their own churches might be repaired, which offer was accepted. They also, at a subsequent period and unsolicited, gave the Presbyterians a lot of ground in Robinson street, for the use of their senior Minister. Such a spirit was in accordance with the spirit of the Gospel, and should ever characterize those who profess to love and worship the same Saviour. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." Different names, or the observance of different forms and ceremonies, should not be permitted to separate—much less to alienate—those who hold one faith and one baptism—who have access by one Spirit —who worship one Lord as the God and Father of all, and cherish one and the same hope of their calling.

The Brick Church was first repaired and reopened in June, 1784. The church in Wall street was repaired and reopened the following year. Mr. Treat not having returned to the city after the war, the united congregations called, in the ensuing spring, the Rev. James Wilson as a colleague with Dr. Rodgers. Mr. Wilson's health failing, he was obliged to resign his charge in 1788. They were then for a few months supplied by two candidates, viz., the Rev. James Muir, from Scotland, and the Rev. Jedediah Morse, author of the American Geography. As the congregations became nearly equally divided between the two, they were unable to unite in a call for either of them. In the following year they called the Rev. John McKnight, who, having accepted their invitation, was installed as co-pastor with Dr. Rodgers, over the united congregations.

About this time the Trustees purchased a lot in Nassau street, joining the lot upon which the church in Wall street was built, and erected a building thereon to be used as a charity school, to be under the care of the Session and Trustees of the Church. The funds required for this object, consisted in part of legacies which had been left for it, and in part of sums raised by voluntary subscriptions. The school went into operation in 1789, and was principally supported by an annual collection in each of the Churches. It continued in connection with the Church until an arrangement was made with the Public School Society, by which it was placed under their care. I mention this to remind you that parochial schools are not a modern institution. They ought to be—as it was intended that they should be—an appendage to every Church. In

1792, the Rev. Samuel Miller was called and installed as one of the pastors of the two Churches. In 1798, a third Presbyterian Church was opened in Rutgers street. The ground upon which it was erected having been presented for that purpose by the late Henry Rutgers, a member of the Reformed Dutch Church. The Rev. Dr. Milledoler was called and settled as the first Pastor of that Church, with the understanding that his labors were to be confined to that charge. In 1807, a colony from the Church in Wall street and from the Brick Church, with others who were unable to obtain pews in either of those places of worship, purchased ground and built the Cedar street Church. Dr. Rodgers was permitted to lay the corner stone, and to preach the opening sermon, in each of those Churches.

In 1809, the Churches were separated,

and became independent of each other: each having their own Pastors, except that Dr. Rodgers continued his pastoral relation to the First and to the Brick Churches.

In that and the following year, the Church in Wall street was rebuilt. The congregation met for public worship from the 9th of December, 1809, to the 11th of August, 1811, in the French Church in Pine street. During the same period another Presbyterian church was built in Spring street, in part, of the materials of the old Church in Wall street. We may here remark that considering the time, the resources and circumstances of the congregation, the house of worship which was erected in Wall street at that time, was relatively quite as costly as the one we have this day entered; and also, that it was built by the contributions of the people, and not with

funds raised by the sale of other property. The pew-owners—as has been done by others in similar cases—relinquished their rights, and repurchased their pews at high prices, to pay the debt incurred by the erection of the new building. They did not embarrass their Trustees and their Building Committee with threats of desertion and abandonment; saying, if you incur the least debt, we will leave you to pay it as you can. Such a spirit would never have built up the Presbyterian Church, nor will it build up any Church—it is that holding back and pulling down spirit which would cripple every noble, generous and benevolent enterprise. They viewed their Trustees as their agents, to prepare a place of worship for them and their children. They felt themselves their *debtors*, and equally interested in the success of the Church. They said, we must have the

Church, and we are willing to pay for it—and they did so.

The separation of the Churches having been effected by mutual consent, Dr. McKnight, with the permission of Presbytery, resigned his pastoral charge.

Dr. Rodgers departed this life in May, 1811, leaving Dr. Miller sole Pastor. For the facts of this brief history I have been indebted to the records of the Church, and to a MS. narrative contained in them, and also to the history of this Church, which has been more fully published—together with some account of each of the Pastors—by Dr. Miller, in his life of Dr. Rodgers—a book which ought to be in every Presbyterian family.

In 1813, the Church was left vacant by the removal of Dr. Miller to Princeton, where, as is known to most of you, he is still living, usefully employed

as one of the Professors in our Theological Seminary—highly respected and much beloved throughout the bounds of our own Church not only, but by the Christian community at large.

In 1815, the Rev. Philip Melancthon Whelpley received and accepted a call to become the Pastor of this Church. He continued in that office until his removal by death in July, 1824. The pulpit was again left vacant, until January, 1826, when he who now addresses you was installed Pastor.

In 1834, the building which had been erected in 1810, was partially destroyed by fire. It was, however, immediately rebuilt, and reopened for worship on the same ground in 1835. The congregation in the meanwhile occupied the church then belonging to the Reformed Presbyterians in Chambers street.

In May, 1844, the commodious and

beautiful house of worship in Wall street was vacated by this congregation, and has been removed to Jersey city, where it is used for the purpose for which it was built, and where it may be visited by those who love to have awakened and to cherish the associations and recollections of former days.

Having been obliged by circumstances, over which we as a religious society had no control, to abandon our former much beloved place of worship—having sought Divine direction—praying in sincerity in the language of Moses—saying "Lord, if thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence"—and having been advised by the Presbytery to which we belong to remove to this part of the city—we felt called upon in the Providence of God to sacrifice personal feelings and considerations, for the promotion of the general good of the Church.

We laid the corner stone of this building in September, 1844. To-day we have been permitted to open it as a house of prayer. We enter it—not to commence a new enterprise, but, with the blessing of God, more effectually to carry forward that holy enterprise which was commenced more than a century ago—we have come here, not for the first time to plant a vine; but as it were, to transplant and to cause it to take deeper root—a vine which has long since been planted, and which has at different times been watered with the dews of heaven, and with the early and latter rains. We have come with the hope and the purpose, more fully and extensively to accomplish the pious and benevolent designs of the original founders of this Church, to afford accommodations for public worship, and for the giving of religious instruction to a greater number

of those for whose benefit these privileges were intended, than were enjoying them in the lower part of the city.

We feel called upon, on the present occasion, to record the loving-kindness and faithfulness of our God, who has for so long a period, and through so many changes and trials preserved a people called by his name—distinguished for their warm and sincere attachment to his truth and devotedness to his service—to whom he has sent a succession of pious, able, and faithful Ministers, who have preached the same Gospel of his grace, and administered the same sacraments in their purity, and after the same simple form of their original institution; among whom he has raised up a succession of godly and intelligent Elders to take the spiritual oversight of the flock, and for whom he has continued a Board of Trustees of high character and

respectability to take an interest in, and to manage with wisdom their temporal affairs? Who can estimate the degree and extent of that salutary influence which has been exerted immediately and remotely on the temporal and eternal interests of men through the preaching of the Gospel—the administration of the sacraments, and in answer to the prayers which have been offered by this single Church? The amount of influence which has been exerted in the formation of Christian character, and in the promotion of the comfort and happiness of individuals, of families and of the community—of the knowledge which has been imparted—of the Christian sympathy which has been awakened—of the true charity which has been exercised—as well as the measures of grace which have been communicated through this medium for the sanctification and pre-

paration of immortal souls for heaven, can be disclosed in eternity only.

We desire to feel our responsibility as the successors of so many generations of those who have gone before us—holding forth the Word of life, and holding fast the form of sound words set forth in our public standards, and derived from the oracles of God. We are called upon in a peculiar manner to walk worthy of our high vocation—we must see to it that we hold the same truths and transmit them uncorrupted as they have come to us. The history of this Church must not be blotted in that period of it in which we constitute her members—there must be no break in the chain at the link which we are expected to supply—there must be no abandonment of any of those doctrines, the faith of which has, according to the testimony of so many witnesses, been

efficacious to sanctify, to support, to comfort and to save. Let us continue in the old ways and walk in the old paths, for we know they are safe and lead to everlasting life.

If, at any time, we should feel tempted to forsake the Church of our Fathers, or to relax our efforts to sustain her, let us remember their noble example of attachment and of devotion to her. What was it that induced them to band together as a Christian Church, and to persevere in their struggles to maintain their separate and distinct existence as such, under all the trying circumstances of their situation? Why did they make so many sacrifices, and submit to so many vexations, and to so much injury and obloquy on account of it? Why did they tax themselves for its support, when they were obliged to contribute to the support of another form of wor-

ship at the same time? When they found the enterprise encompassed with so many difficulties, why did they not abandon it? It was principle; it was their love of the truth and of the administration of the ordinances of God, as they believed them to have been instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ; it was for the sake of a good conscience, both toward God and toward man.

Wherefore, when tempted to embrace a different system, let us ask ourselves, is the religion which it teaches *purer* and *holier* than that of our Fathers? Are the forms of its worship more Scriptural or more spiritual than theirs? Is it a system of truth more efficacious to prepare us for death and for heaven, than that which we have been taught by our Fathers? Is it one which will cause us to hate sin more—to love and practice holiness more perfectly? which will

more effectually change our spirits, improve our hearts, and reform our lives? which will make us more truly humble—more sincerely and devoutly pious? which will constrain us more powerfully to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, and will enable us to serve God with more simplicity, fidelity and godly sincerity? which will cause us to love his truth, his ordinances, and his kingdom more, and to abound more in all good works, to the honor and glory of His name?

If so, let us embrace it anywhere, and under any name. But if not, why should we renounce our faith, repudiate the validity of the ministrations of the Church which God has honored? within the pale of which we were born, within whose precincts we were solemnly dedicated to God, and taught to worship Him only? Rather let us abide

in the precious and endearing Church relations into which God, in his Providence, has brought us, cherishing a sense of our present and constant dependence on Him; and supplicating the continuance of his favor. We declare this day, publicly before God and the world, that we hold the same faith which has been professed and proclaimed in this Church from its commencement. We desire to reiterate our sincere, devout and fervent supplications, that this house may ever be used exclusively for the pure and holy worship of the One only living and true God; that the peculiar doctrines of divine revelation, as received by the Presbyterian Church, may continue to be believed, faithfully preached and inculcated here; and that the dispensation of them may be attended with the demonstration of the Spirit, and with divine and saving power. That we, with

our children and their successive generations, may here assemble from time to time in honor of Jehovah, to receive the bread and water of life, so abundantly provided by the great Head of the Church; that multitudes may here be brought to the knowledge and acknowledgment of the truth, according to godliness, be preserved in the unity of the Spirit, and in the bonds of peace, walking in faith, and hope, and joy, through their union with Him who is the resurrection and the life; whose delight and privilege it shall be, to be actively and successfully engaged in the work of winning souls, until all the ransomed of the Lord shall be gathered into his fold, and time shall be no more.

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